

(Washington, DC) - Congressman Jason Altmire (PA-4) released the following statement today on the Responsible Redeployment from Iraq Act (H.R. 2956) and in response to the White House's interim report on the Iraqi government's progress in meeting key political and economic benchmarks as required by Congress:

"Today, I will vote for the responsible redeployment of U.S. troops from Iraq. I have reviewed the president's progress report and today, six months into the President's "surge," none of the political benchmarks set by Congress have been met. The report is particularly pessimistic with regard to the Iraqi government's failure to enact key political reforms. This is exactly why I believe a redeployment of U.S. troops out of Iraq is our only remaining leverage to convince the Iraqi government to take responsibility for the future of their own country."

"Our focus must be on protecting the American people from the threat of terrorism and Al Qaeda. The American public should be outraged at this week's American intelligence reports that Al Qaeda is nearly as strong today as it was six years ago, just before 9/11. For too long, the president has preferred to focus American military forces on his stay-the-course strategy in Iraq while Osama bin Laden remains at large, rebuilds Al Qaeda and plans further attacks on the United States. It is vital that we refocus our efforts away from the civil war in Iraq and towards fighting terrorism and defeating Al Qaeda around the world."

Note. Today, the U.S. House of Representatives will vote on H.R. 2956, the Responsible Redeployment from Iraq Act. The legislation would require American forces to begin redeployment within 120 days and to complete the transition to a limited presence by April 1, 2008.